FEATURES
Wippman Reflects on Hamilton
Moss'24 sat down with President Wippman before he retires as College President. **pages 3 & 5**

FEATURES
Alumnus Builds School
Professors David and Sharon Rivera traveled to the Logos International Academy in Georgia. **pages 13-14**

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
7 Hamlets Concert
Leon '25 recaps the recent 7 Hamlets concern featuring various student bands. **page 21**

The Spectator

Thursday, May 2, 2024

Volume LXIII
Number XXII

Publishing the Truth, From Good Motives and For Justifiable Ends

Three Minute Thesis competition names winners across disciplines

by Erin Delaney '26 & Mia Antonini '26
NEWS EDITORS

The 2024 Three Minute Thesis Competition was held on Saturday, April 27 in the Bradford Auditorium, where seniors were tasked with the challenge of summarizing their thesis to an audience in just three minutes. This competition was open to all members of the senior class and had nineteen entries from seventeen different students, covering fifteen different concentrations. Community members from Clinton and Utica formed the judging panel to ensure that students make their presentations accessible to a general audience and not just people within the individual disciplines. The judges considered students' engagement with the audience and how well the slides supported what they were talking about.

Participants of the competition were eligible for cash prizes. The first place prize was $1000, second place prize was $750, third place prize was $500, and People's Choice prize was $250. The People's Choice Award went to the speech with the most in-person audience votes. The Three Minute Thesis competition is organized by the Oral Communication Center, with financial support from the Leonard C. Ferguson Endowment.

The Three Minute Thesis competition was developed by The University of Queensland. According to their website, "the Three Minute Thesis competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by Doctor of Philosophy students. Developed by The University of Queensland, 3MT cultivates students' academic, presentation, and research communication skills. The competition supports their capacity to effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience."

Julien Swoap '24 won the first place prize for his neuroscience thesis titled "Investigating the Impact of Intrusive Thoughts on Selective Attention." Swoap opened his presentation presenting the statistic that on average, people have over 6,200 thoughts per day. "You might be familiar with the thought while driving: Oh, what if I just turned and crashed my car?" he said. "Now, while alarming, we do have a name for this. This is an intrusive thought and intrusive thoughts come and go for people all across the world."

Swoap explained that for individuals with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), intrusive thoughts are more significant to their daily experience. Individuals with OCD have worse selective attention, which is the ability to attend to relevant information while ignoring irrelevant information. Intrusive thoughts present themselves as irrelevant information that take away their attention from relevant information. The research question that inspired Swoap's research is how OCD relates to selective attention and intrusive thoughts. He hypothesized that individuals in the intrusive thought group had worse selective attention, as these intrusive thoughts would pull their attention away from the task at hand.

He took 62 Hamilton students and randomly assigned them to an experimental group or a control group. They were told to visualize a personally relevant intrusive thought, such as thinking about a family member being harmed in some way. The control group was told to visualize a neutral scene, such as a common storefront that they were familiar with. The participants of the experiment completed a computerized visual search task that measures selective attention.

Swoap actually found that the control group exhibited worse selective attention. He hypothesizes that this is due to the effect of stress, which is known to be associated with intrusive thoughts and can improve performance. He believes

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ORAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

The Three Minute Thesis competition welcomed students from 15 concentrations. Pictured above are the People's Choice Winner Bobbi Roca '24, and the top three winners, Julien Swoap '24, Hannah Jablons '24, and Aliana Potter '24.

that those with the intrusive thoughts were stressed during the test, which allowed them to focus more and perform better.

Swoap concluded that there is a need for more research "to better understand the mechanisms of how individuals experience intrusive thoughts and…better understand how these individuals navigate day-to-day functioning, such as the very important task of selective attention which allows us to navigate and interact with the world in beneficial ways."

Hannah Jablons '24 won the second place prize for their history thesis titled "Dan's Manhattan Plaza," focusing on Manhattan Plaza, a residential Manhattan building that created a space for those in the performing arts space. Manhattan Plaza, initially was meant to be used as middle-income subsidized housing, but due to the city's precarious economic condition, this was not possible. As Jablons shares, "the reason that Manhattan Plaza failed as middle-income subsidized housing is parallel to the reason that the city almost went bankrupt." The project's survival depended on the collaboration and support of both private and public groups to make Manhattan Plaza Section 8 housing, which allows for residents to pay a component of their salary towards rent on a sliding scale.

Dan Rose was responsible for filling the building with residents, and through an original interview with Jablons, was able to be officially credited with the idea of making the space a dedicated space for performing artists, working under the mantra that "artists were broke, but not poor, which evaded stereotypes about the typical Section 8 resident."

They conclude their summary with a key point of their thesis: "when you give people housing, you give them the stability and the freedom to take risks in their career, and when you give all that to artists, you make a miracle."

Aliana Potter '24, who won the third place prize for her thesis titled "Primary Care Provider Practice Patterns in Health Provider Shortage Areas and non-HPSAs" has an interdisciplinary concentration in Public Health.

Through interviewing 15 different primary care providers, half in Utica and half in the Boston area, Potter aimed to understand the impact of the Healthcare Provider Shortage Areas (HSPAs)—an area with less than one provider per 3,500 residents—in the Utica Area.

Many providers highlighted rates of malpractice and burnout from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some Boston interviewees highlighted something surprising for the area: "the Healthcare Provider Shortage Area is not accurately reflecting the reality." In conclusion, Potter deduced that there needs to be further research into the shortage struggle nationally and there is a great need to solve burnout and administrative burden issues in the healthcare space to better support physicians as a whole.

The People's Choice Award was won by Bobbi Roca '24 for her biology thesis titled "Climate Change and Trees: Which ones are built different." Roca told the audience that climate change can manifest itself in places like upstate New York as early warming temperatures followed by cold temperatures. "For us this isn't really harmful," Roca said. "But for trees this is actually really dangerous because at the end of tree branches there are buds that will eventually bloom to become either leaves or flowers or roots." Roca explained that when winter temperatures return after an "early spring," the leaves, flowers, and fruits can die because they are not able to withstand these really cold temperatures. During this warming period, the snow on the ground melts, exposing the soil to cold temperatures, which allows the roots below the soil to get damaged. The roots are unable to send an adequate amount of nutrients to the leaves above.

The question that directed Roca's research was: "How do tree seeds, these tiny little beings without this large energy reserve, respond to fall springs, followed by really cold temperatures?" Roca replicated an early spring followed by cold temperatures through a series of temperature chambers and found that the effect of this phenomenon depends on the species. Roca discovered that White Pine trees were "really good at not getting tricked into germination early by fall springs and also surviving really cold temperatures." Roca concluded her thesis presentation by recommending to the audience that they consider planting white pines in their backyard, as these trees are the species that are best equipped to survive the consequences of climate change.

When the presentations concluded, index cards were handed out to all audience members except for the judges for voting on the People's Choice Award. The audience members each wrote down a name and put their card into a ballot box. The judges reported a particularly close year, as there were only one to two point differences in the scores of the majority of the presentations. Videos of the presentations are available on the Hamilton College YouTube.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

The Three Minute Thesis competition was founded at the Univeristy of Queensland in 2008, and now 3MT competitions are in place in over 900 universities in over 85 countries around the world.

May 2, 2024

President Wippman reflects on Hamilton

by Eric Moss '24
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As the 2023-24 school year comes to a close, so too does the tenure of Hamilton's 20th college president, David Wippman, near its end. President Wippman, who joined the Hamilton community in July 2016, will officially retire from his office in Buttrick Hall on June 30, 2024, with President-Elect Steven Tepper set to step in the very next day. Now in the last full week of classes in the spring semester, President Wippman expressed in a conversation with The Spectator, "I think I'm in the position of a lot of seniors. When I ask seniors how they're feeling, the word I hear over and over is bittersweet. They're excited about what's coming up, but they're sad to be leaving a place that's meant so much to them. And that's how I feel. Over eight years, I've certainly come to love the College."

Under President Wippman's leadership, the College has seen significant strides in a multitude of efforts, whether in the renovation of campus facilities, investments in faculty and staff, or in the development of programs such as Common Ground and the establishment of resources such as the ALEX network—all of which are designed to promote student experiences and accelerate the College's goals of producing engaged and capable citizens. Additionally, the Because Hamilton campaign, which concluded just less than a year ago, exceeded its goal of $400 million, more than double that of any prior Hamilton fundraising endeavor, and according to the College website, includes over $120 million in student scholarship aid. In the last eight years, the College has also taken critical steps toward increasing the socioeconomic, geographic, and demographic diversity of its students, hiring the first Vice President of DEI, and continually expanding the capacities of this office. While community members are likely familiar with these accomplishments, the admissions office has also embraced the College's most selective pools of applicants in recent years, with record breaking application numbers and yield rates—a testament to prospective students also taking note.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

President Wippman addresses an audience.

In response to President Wippman's May 2023 retirement announcement, Chair of the Board of Trustees David Solomon offered, "From his first days on campus, [Wippman] embraced Hamilton's long-standing commitments to access and opportunity, and the College's mission to prepare students to become active citizens by encouraging them to confront new ideas and consider other perspectives." When asked about how his perception of Hamilton may have changed from the time he took office, President Wippman remarked, "I've learned a lot—about higher education, about liberal arts colleges, about the kind of education we provide—and what I thought at the beginning was all true, more or less. I really came in thinking that in many ways the kind of deeply engaged, personalized education that a place like Hamilton provides is the gold standard, but I have a much better understanding of what that means now."

In addition to his being a fiercely dedicated champion of the liberal arts model, President Wippman is also a prolific author on the value of higher education as a whole, having authored and co-authored dozens of pieces in esteemed outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and even *The Spectator* during his time at Hamilton. While reflecting on the last eight years, President Wippman discussed how he has seen the state of higher education as a whole evolve, and the responsibility we bear as a college community to combat a declining public perception of its value. "I think the environment for higher education has changed dramatically, and not for the better," President Wippman remarked. He explained that, "when we as a sector lose the public's trust, there's an enormous range of potential consequences."

Many of these consequences arrive in the form of proposed legislation, and President Wippman, a lawyer by training, expressed concern for the ways in which such measures, if implemented, would restrict the the ways in which schools like Hamilton can operate. President Wippman warned of "proposed legislation that would impose all kinds of restrictions on the kinds of things that can be taught around race, and gender, and sexual orientation," which, at the moment, are taking effect in many red states around the country. Given the current events unfolding in the Middle East, President Wippman also described "a proposal to have the Education Department send monitors to college campuses to look for evidence of anti-semitism, and if they find it, to insist on changes and to take away federal funding if colleges don't comply." Additionally, here in the state of New York, according to President Wippman, "In Governor Hochul's most recent budget, schools with endowments over $750 million, which includes Hamilton, [are] losing Bundy Aid, which is unrestricted aid that the government provides to colleges and universities, and I don't think that would have happened in a different environment for higher ed."

PHOTO BY NANCY L. FORD

President Wippman will retire on June 30, wrapping up an eight year tenure as Hamilton's 20th college president.

Institutions for higher education are currently under the spotlight in national and global news outlets, as protests over the Israel-Palestine conflict envelop the campuses of colleges and universities nationwide. According to CNN, more than 1,500 people have been arrested on college and university campuses since April 18, with active police intervention most prominently seen at schools such as Columbia, UT Austin, UCLA, and

Dear Hamilton Community,

I entered the fall of my freshman year, along with the rest of the Class of 2024, at the height of COVID protocols on the Hill. I joined the newspaper as a staff writer and discovered the unknown wonders of our campus by telling its story. As I have evolved in my own path at *The Spectator*, whether as an investigative reporter, as News Editor, or as Editor-in-Chief, I have also witnessed the Hamilton community evolve greatly, overcome tremendous challenges and flourish as a campus dedicated to supporting its members.

My experience at *The Spectator* has been among the greatest highlights of my college career, and I am indebted to those with whom I have collaborated to carry on the legacy of this publication these last few years. Accompanying me in my own departure are several more seniors, without whom we could not have so widely and so meaningfully covered campus-related events and stories this year and in previous years. In particular, I would like to thank Lily, Owen, Will, Lizzie, Grace, Pat, Ray, Stella and Hannah for their tireless efforts in and out of the media suite. I am also grateful to be leaving *The Spectator* in such capable hands, and working with Greg this past semester has shown me that the future of this paper is exceedingly bright.

There are many more moments still ahead of us this year, and as we approach final exams season, for some of us the very last, I wish everyone the absolute best of luck. I will miss the community that I have called home for the last four years, just as I will miss the people who have made it so extraordinary. I will take with me many memories of my time on the Hill, but I rest assured, as I hope others may as well, that I can always tune in to the happenings of campus through *The Spectator.*

Signing off,
Eric

The Spectator

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Celebrating 157 years,
we *were first published as* The Hamilton Campus *in 1866.*

The Spectator's Letter to the Editor section is designed to be a forum for the entire Hamilton community to discuss and debate campus, local, national, and global issues. Pieces published in the section express the opinion of the individual writers and are not necessarily the opinions of *The Spectator*, its editors or the Media Board.

Letters to the Editor are welcome from all students, alumni/ae, faculty, friends of the college, and Hamilton community members.

The Spectator has the following policies for submission:

1. Submissions are due by 10:00 p.m. on the Monday before publication. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.
2. Letters should be no longer than 500 words. The editors reserve the right to cut off letters at 500 words.
3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.
4. *The Spectator* reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.
5. If a piece is determined to be libelous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, or an unnecessary and/or unwarranted ad hominem or personal attack, it will not be published.

About Us

The Hamilton College Spectator, *publication number USPS 612-840, is published weekly by the Hamilton College Student Media Board while classes are in session. For more information e-mail spec@hamilton.edu. Our offices are located on the second floor of the Sadove Student Center. The deadline for advertisements is Monday the week of publication. For further information, please e-mail specads@hamilton.edu.*

Continued from page 3

USC, the last of which has already canceled its commencement ceremonies. At this critical moment, for many, Wippman fears, trust in higher education may decrease further. Wippman expressed, "We're seeing challenges to free speech and academic freedom, and I'm concerned that the environment is deteriorating rather than improving, so I think it's vital that those of us who care about higher ed and think that the mission that we are pursuing is incredibly valuable, not just to the students who benefit from it directly, but to society as a whole…have an obligation to really try to change the narrative, and articulate for people why what we do is so important for the United States."

While the Hamilton community has been transformed in many ways over the course of the last eight years, there are many more initiatives the College is ready to tackle, and that we as a community can work toward achieving. As Wippman expressed, "There are a lot of things that are unfinished and there will be new programs and ideas and goals that the College will evolve over time." Wippman spoke of the upcoming development of an innovation center as part of the digital component of the school's strategic plan that is underway, as well as highlighted the continued work centered around the DEI mission. Additionally, as Wippman described, "We are in the process of completing a campus master plan, but that's just the first step in what I think will turn out to be a much broader strategic planning process…there's a lot of needs identified in that plan—residence halls, dining halls, athletic facilities, and many others—but that's just one component of a larger set of needs that the College has." Wippman also spoke on the priority of student mental health and the expansion of resources therein, as well as the idea of a new fundraising campaign in the future. "It's an ongoing process, always," he remarked.

For the Hamilton community, that process will be continued under the stewardship of a new president beginning this summer. When asked if there was any advice he wished he had received on his way into office to impart onto President-Elect Tepper, Wippman responded, "Steven and I speak regularly, I think he's going to be fantastic, I honestly couldn't be happier that he will be my successor here. My advice is not so much for him but for the community. I really hope people will support him, and understand that these jobs are challenging, that different segments of our community feel very strongly about some issues, but they go in different directions, and it's not an easy role…I'm hoping the community will welcome him, and do everything they can to support him."

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE YOUTUBE CHANNEL

President Wippman recalls the many videos in which he collaborated with students, pointing in particular to his time in a carpool karaoke session that he did with students, faculty and staff while riding around campus and the Clinton area during the holiday season.

As he prepares for his departure from the Hill, President Wippman reflected on some personal highlights from his time at Hamilton. He expressed that there are many memories with not only faculty and staff, but with students that he will take away. Wippman recalled the many videos on which he collaborated with students, noting, "When we did the carpool karaoke and the students were singing and we had faculty singing and staff…it was just a hoot, and I will definitely remember those moments." Additionally, Wippman offered, "I'll remember just sitting with students in the dining hall and having conversations or on the sides of a game or at a concert. I will remember the theater productions, which have just been amazing…the caliber of performances and really everything associated with the productions. I will really miss going to those."

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic remains a core feature of President Wippman's tenure here at Hamilton. Wippman reflected on the efforts of the community as a whole during this challenging time, recalling, "That was a moment where the College really rose to the occasion in a pretty extraordinary way, and it was a full community effort." Though acknowledging that the pandemic already feels like history given how quickly and effectively campus has restored regular operations, Wippman described how the community "really had to reorganize how we operated, and students had to change their expectations around what college life should be, and faculty had to go through multiple teaching modalities, and staff had to physically reconfigure the campus." Though a challenging time period for Hamilton, and for institutions of higher education around the world, Wippman applauded the efforts of our community members, remarking, "It was an enormous lift, and I think Hamilton did it as well as any and better than most, and that was something that really stands out to me."

While President Wippman's tenure has undoubtedly fallen in a time period within which the challenges toward institutions of higher education have never been greater, Wippman's impression of his time on the Hill represents an enduring spirit, and as he concludes his presidency, he reflected, "I will miss the rhythms of academic life, the beauty of the campus, but fundamentally it's the people I'll miss, and I've had the opportunity to get to know and learn from and really appreciate so many different people here and in our alumni community." When asked how he plans to indulge his free time moving forward, Wippman responded, "Spending a lot of time with my now-16-month-old grandson. I bought a house that's an eight minute walk from where he is, and coincidentally his parents live, so I'll be doing that. I'll be doing a number of higher ed projects, but on a much more relaxed schedule. I'll keep writing about higher education because I care about those issues, and I'll devote a fair amount of time to recreation."

President Wippman, just like other seniors here at Hamilton, will soon find that his time on the Hill has reached its end. Looking to the future, Wippman noted, "I have a lot of memories…that I will take away with me, and I hope that I will maintain my relationship with Hamilton so I hope that it's not coming to a complete halt. My predecessors have remained engaged with the College and I hope to, but in the way they have—when asked."

May 2, 2024

Letter to the editor: ESG divestment

To the Trustees of Hamilton College:

Hamilton College's Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees manages $1.4 billion, the 61st-largest endowment among private US colleges and the 12th-largest among US liberal arts colleges. This committee is ultimately unaccountable to the student body and to the faculty.

The Investment Committee claims to reaffirm the College's commitment to "active citizenship" and to consider "environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues as part of its investment process." However, the Investment Committee only considers ESG insofar as they "[improve] the long term financial returns of the Endowment." This committee also admits to investing "less than 2 percent" of the 2023 endowment in "direct exposure to fossil fuels." Hamilton College claims that "fossil fuel investments have not played a significant role for the endowment in many years." And yet, the so-called 'insignificant' fossil fuel investment of 2% or less is as massive as $28,000,000. Hamiltonians for Divestment remembers the 1986 protests for divestment from South Africa apartheid; the college has historically invested in unethical institutions.

We, Hamiltonians for Divestment, investigated the endowment's investments—to no avail. Frustrated by such secrecy, we do not trust the Investment Committee's stewardship of the endowment or its ability to make investment decisions with students' interests and futures prioritized. We hold the Investment Committee accountable for its investments, and we believe that the only method to ensure Hamilton College engages in democratic and socially responsible investment is to make the endowment subject to public examination. We condemn Hamilton College and the Investment Committee for systematically suppressing information about the endowment.

Hamiltonians for Divestment demand:
1. Disclosure of all of Hamilton College's endowment investments. This disclosure must be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
2. Continued endowment investment transparency after initial disclosure.
3. A democratically elected student body to review the ethics of the endowment.

We expect a public plan to disclose and divest by the beginning of the fall semester.

Signed,

Scott Levy ’25 and Joseph Fandrey ’26
Hamiltonians for Divestment

Letter to the editor: Basil Brown

Dear Hamilton Campus Community,

“Those who organized a vigil [Sunday April 14]”, otherwise known as Questbridge, the Justice and Equity Committee of SGA, SMART, CIF, FCC, GSU, Green Apple, and the Disabled Students Network, feel as if President Wippman’s announcement of Basil Brown’s death had “insufficient energy” to address the situation. We appreciate the response, but we feel it fell short and came too late, after the labor of organizing our community vigil was already forced onto the shoulders of mourning student leaders.

First of all, painting Basil Brown’s inability to navigate Hamilton’s campus with a disability as anything other than a systemic issue with Hamilton’s inaccessible campus directly contradicts their legacy and their personal experience. Administration neglects the needs of disabled students by “claiming” that Hamilton is accessible because it is in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, Hamilton circumvents the ADA because Hamilton is not federally funded and has historically protected buildings that do not have to undergo renovations. Portraying Basil’s struggles with accessibility on this campus as a personal problem or a result of COVID-19 is ableist and is a form of victim-blaming. This victim-blaming was further perpetuated by mentioning Basil’s contraction of COVID-19, but neglecting that Basil contracted COVID-19 toward the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester, the semester during which the only requirement to return to campus was an image of a negative COVID rapid test and 157 students tested positive in the first week of classes.

Second of all, this announcement comes nearly a week after many student groups on campus sent out our own announcement, showing a passive reaction to student’s outcry for accountability and communication. Students were forced to share news of the event by communicating with each other. Students in mourning repeatedly needed to inform their peers, professors, and bosses about a triggering and emotionally heavy situation. Faculty and staff received no resources on how to sensitively discuss matters related to mental health in classes despite many students being in a vulnerable state and easily triggered.

Student organizations largely led by Basil’s grieving friends planned and executed a vigil, with little to no administrative support or attendance. The resources sent in the email include the Counseling Center and the Student Support Care Team. The Counseling Center only has minimal virtual appointments available for the rest of the semester and the Student Support Care Team is equally busy and unreliable. Even with this acknowledgment, no additional resources have been offered to help students adjust and process. It is too late and it is not enough.

President Wippman, as you called for in your announcement, we will keep supporting each other. Because you give us no other choice. Hamilton Community, please know we, Basil’s friends and those who are left on our own to support each other, do not find President Wippman’s addressing of the situation to be enough. We demand accountability for Hamilton’s inaccessibility, lack of transparency, and unwillingness to designate effective resources for student support in times of crisis. Basil does not deserve to be disrespected by Hamilton’s administration in both life and death.

If you need mental health resources, there are off campus resources hyperlinked here on *The Spectator* website.

With love and solidarity,

Hannah Jablons ’24, Lucy Naughton ’24, Dani Bernstein ’24, Emily Weinstein ’24, Henry Gooding ’24, Hollis Mann ’24, and Raymond Ni ’24.
Friends of Basil Brown

Campus Safety Incident Report

In an effort to respect discretion, *The Spectator* and Campus Safety have not disclosed the idenities of the students involved in these reports.

Thursday, March 25
02:16 a.m.— Concern For Welfare — Dunham Residence Hall
12:50 p.m.— Motorist Assist— Parking Lots: Root Student Lot
8:11 p.m. — Suspicious Activity —Beinecke Village: Howard Diner
10:49 p.m.— Assist — On Campus Other Location

Friday, March 26
8:19 p.m.— Motor Vehicle Accident — South Campus

Saturday, March 27
1:22 a.m. — Medical Emergency — Dunham Residence Hall
8:46 a.m. — Assist — Beinecke Village: Mail Center
10:15 a.m. — Animal Complaint — Kirkland Residence Hall
12:48 p.m. — Assist — Beinecke Village: Mail Center
5:20 p.m. — Larceny Complaint — Johnson Center for Health and Wellness
10:08 p.m. — Noise Complaint — Eels House
11:33 p.m. — Noise Complaint — Griffin Road Appartments

Sunday, March 28
1:13 a.m. — Noise Complaint — North Campus
2:35 a.m. — Disorderly Conduct — South Campus
1:18 p.m. — Medical Emergency — Babbitt Residence Hall
4:26 p.m. — Medical Emergency — Campus Safety Building
7:40 p.m. — Area Check — Bundy West Residence Hall: Basement

Monday, March 29
8:47 a.m. — Animal Complaint— Kirkland Residence Hall
12:39 p.m. — Area Check — Kennedy Arts Center (KTSA)

Tuesday, March 30
4:02 p.m. — Fire Alarm — McIntosh Residence Hall

Build anew or renovate the old? Community feedback on the Campus Master Plan

by Raymond Ni '24
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

In the wake of Hamilton College's Campus Master Plan, students voice both enthusiasm and concern. Designed as a roadmap for campus development over the next decades, the plan involves ambitious projects, such as expanding student housing, while proposing controversial changes, such as the introduction of a centralized dining hall. As discussions unfold surrounding sites such as the Days-Massolo Cultural Center (DMC) and the Afro-Latin Cultural Center (ALCC), students grapple with the balance between innovation and preservation.

In contrast to other renovation plans such as Root Hall, which focused on a single renovation, the Campus Master Plan focuses on more long-term changes to campus. According to the campus master plan website, this encompasses a "10+ year roadmap for development and improvement of the physical campus."

The planning procedure for the Campus Master Plan started with a visit from Sasaki, an architectural design firm that specializes in designing college campuses on April 24 2023. During this planning process, which lasted from March to Dec. of 2023, the Sasaki planning team underwent three phases; they assessed the physical campus environment, established consensus on a preferred direction and published final planning reports to inform the campus community.

Mike Klapmeyer, Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning, spoke about the motivators for implementing the Campus Master Plan. He said, "The College had previously completed discrete studies for athletics, student housing and landscaping, but had no comprehensive plan for campus renewal and expansion. Rather than a piecemeal approach, we engaged Sasaki as a partner to help us gather data and strategize on the needs and sequencing of future projects."

Of the many suggestions outlined in the Campus Master Plan, the proposed changes to increase the overall availability of housing with a new dorm, was widely praised by the community. As outlined in the Open Forum on Feb. 9, 2024, "student enrollment growth has outpaced the addition of residential space in the last decade, limiting surge capacity and prompting the conversion of lounge spaces and employee housing to student rooms." Currently, the Campus Master Plan recommends the introduction of a new student apartment facility and a new semi-suite-style residence hall holding a total of 338 beds.

Ashley Beck '26 supported the housing improvements in the Campus Master Plan. For instance, in relation to the Bundy East and West Residence Halls, she said, "Bundy is the worst dorm on campus. It's far away. It's disgusting. I think their plan to fix Bundy up and turn [it] into apartment-style suites would at least make Bundy a nice place to live."

Lucy Naughton '24 echoed Beck's opinions on the proposed housing improvements as part of the Campus Master Plan. She explained, "I definitely think we need more housing, I think housing is a huge problem and it has been for my entire time here. I think it's way overdue for them to build new dorms and apartments, so I'm happy with that."

Despite the praise for housing, students expressed major concerns about the introduction of a new centralized dining hall on College Hill Road. In the current iteration, plans are in place to construct a new dining hall in the current location of the Days-Massolo Cultural Center (DMC), the Afro-Latin Cultural Center (ALCC) and the Philosophy House.
Klapmeyer, who described the implementation of the centralized dining hall as the "most critiqued aspect of the plan," noted that as a result of community feedback, the current dining hall plan has changed, driving some confusion among students and faculty.

He said that, taking into account community feedback, the current plan keeps McEwen Dining Hall, while creating a new space for Diner and Soper Commons. Soper Commons and Diner, to Klapmeyer, "suffers from insufficient space for seating and service."

Some students raised concerns about losing Howard Diner's unique atmosphere, as a non-traditional, '50s diner style dining option. Klapmeyer notes that their plan included an "expanded diner within the consolidated facility, that maintains its unique character and operates independently."

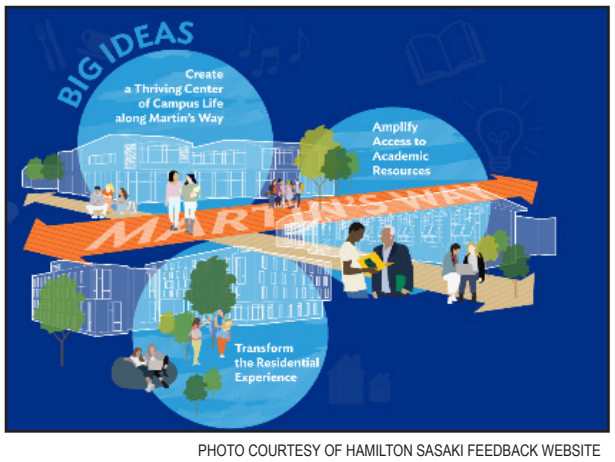

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON SASAKI FEEDBACK WEBSITE

Sasaki graphic depicts big idea concept alternatives for the Campus Master Plan

In the current plans, Soper Commons is to be replaced with a Learning Commons that consolidates aspects of ALEX, the Career Center, and the Registrar's Office. Emily Boviero '24 took concern with the removal of dining spaces with the proposed addition of the centralized dining hall. She said, "I don't think they should take away another dining hall. I think they should add another because there is really no net gain. You're just taking one and then adding another one in. There needs to be more places on campus to live and eat."

Similarly, Naughton said that while she agreed that the dining on campus needed to be improved, she echoed Boviero's criticism of replacing current buildings. She said, "I also think we do need some sort of improvement of the dining halls. I don't know if we necessarily need to knock one down and rebuild it. There's a problem with finding seating, so I would just say I think that maybe the dining halls should be expanded, or they should add a new one in addition to the ones we already have."

The relocation of the DMC, the ALCC, and the Philosophy House represented a major point of contention, especially for students who are currently involved in the DMC affinity organizations on campus. In the current version of the Campus Master Plan, a new Affinity Group Village at Anderson-Connell Alumni Center is proposed to replace the DMC and the ALCC. By expanding Anderson Connell, the Affinity Group Village intends to "meet the needs of current and future cultural identity and spiritual and religious life groups." Additionally, plans are proposed to renovate and expand Benedict Hall for the Philosophy department.

According to the Days-Massolo Center website, a building that once held the Computer Science department, was converted into the Days-Massolo Center (DMC), named after trustees Drew Days and Art Massolo, in 2011. This occurred after seven student activists, as part of the Social Justice Initiative (SJI), advocated for the creation of a Cultural Education Center (CEC). This serves as a physical space for cultural and identity-based organizations on campus to facilitate programming and learn about justice-based issues.

Jun Reiss '26, the current interim president of the Asian Student Union (ASU) and incoming Cluster Lead for the DMC,

criticized the administrative handling of the Affinity Group Village. He said, "I was at a conference at Vassar recently with their Asian Student Union. They said something similar had happened to them a couple of years back and that their [cultural diversity] building had become sort of devoid of all personality. People use it as a multicultural center but it was mostly a facet of the administration, and it wasn't really a safe space for students of color, queer students, and marginalized students."

Daphne Cerrato '26, co-president of La Vanguardia (LV), described the significance of the DMC and ALCC to her as a student of color. She explained, "I don't agree with the idea of moving those spaces because those are two places built and made for people of color and underrepresented groups. I feel like removing those spaces is just a really big stab in the back. You just so happened to remove the two spaces that are primarily used by people of color."

To many student leaders of DMC affinity groups, spaces like the DMC and ALCC hold historical significance for them. Naughton, past co-chair of the Center for Intersectional Feminism (CIF), describes the importance of space. She said, "It feels good knowing that people with similar values to you and want to see the same changes on campus as you will be in that same room after you graduate. I think that demolishing the DMC sends the message that we're just starting over as opposed to just building upon the history that we have."

Despite student concerns about displacement, many of the DMC student leaders interviewed were open to making improvements to the spaces. Some leaders suggested making improvements to the existing buildings as an alternative to constructing new ones.

Cerrato emphasized the difference between rebuilding and removal. She said, "I totally agree that a lot of buildings on campus need to be renovated. Do I think the DMC is one of them? Sure… But I am never upset with a little makeover. At the end of the day, it's not just a rebuilding of the DMC. It's a removal with completely different spaces being introduced there."

Naughton agreed with Cerrato's point, proposing renovations that mirrored Root Hall. She said, "I don't think everything needs to stay the same. For example, I think it would be much better if they renovated the DMC and maybe added new rooms…They renovated Root and it's completely different but they kept the building because there's some semblance of history. It could be a similar thing."

Boviero, the current Programming Lead for the DMC, further echoed these points. She said, "I think the DMC holds so much historical significance and I think tearing it down doesn't sit right with me. I understand that they want to make a bigger building [and] just make it more contemporary, but this building is so important to so many groups of people."

While students held many concerns about the Campus Master Plan, many also described the shortcomings in the feedback process for student opinions. In particular, interviewees mentioned the lack of opportunities students had to attend feedback sessions.

Jackson Strout '24, class president and chair of the Residential Life and Safety Committee of SGA, described the inaccessible time slot used for the Feb. feedback session. Strout explained that many students were in class during the afternoon feedback session in Feb. He said, "The effort was good. The execution was not…When you have meetings at those times, you're basically saying to everyone [that] we don't want any of you to go."

While Strout initially described the campus community to be relatively unaware of the Campus Master Plan, he described the efforts taken by himself and Facilities to advertise it to students through methods such as billboards. Strout said, "At the end of the second meeting, I was like 'Hey, can we put these boards everywhere?' and they put it up everywhere so people were aware of the plan. Actually being able to see it and walk past it is huge, and I'd say the reception was not good."

Beck, an active observer of the Campus Master Plan since Spring 2023, critiqued the initial communication process but acknowledged that communication was getting better. Beck said, "In the beginning, it was a little rough because they were only communicating through email…Now, they're really starting to explore other ways of getting community involvement. I think as students, we have to have this responsibility of being aware, and Facilities Management has an obligation on their end to reach out."

The Community Conversion on April 24 to discuss the Campus Plan, represented another opportunity for campus community members to express criticisms of the Campus Master Plan. During the event, a 'world café style' format was implemented where students rotated between tables with the following topics: living space design, cultural spaces, religious spaces, an affinity village, digital innovation center, third places and building community and accessibility. Student conversation facilitators and faculty members were in charge of leading discussions while taking notes on student concerns.

Luke Resetarits '27, a community conversation facilitator and event planner, described the community conversation to be a success. He said, "The goal was to hear the voices of students and faculty. I think it was a huge success and that was shown by just how many people showed up."

A central debate that emerged since the introduction of the Campus Master Plan was the degree to which buildings should be changed or preserved for the purposes of significance. To some students, the two are not mutually exclusive to one another. Teddy Gercken '27, for instance, describes campus renovation projects at other universities. "Look at [the University of Chicago]. They did massive renovations to a lot of their old historic building[s], and they continue to look old and historic… It would really be a shame to bulldoze [buildings] in the name of newer and better when we could [renovate existing buildings]."

Strout echoes this point, saying, "One of the biggest things I've heard overall is that people don't necessarily want new things. They want the things that already exist to be bigger and better. Like you can make the Little Pub bigger and better."

To follow up, Beck expressed the need to improve the physical accessibility of existing buildings on campus. Beck said, "We need to think more creatively as a Hamilton community and really figure out how to use our space to make these new ideas happen while preserving the spaces that we [already] have. If you're going to add on to them, find ways to make them more accessible, so that more people can use them."

Though students may have various complaints about the Campus Master Plan, Klapmeyer emphasized that proposals for facilities are merely concepts and not meant to imply predetermination. He said, "Decisions involving specific locations, exterior aesthetics and interior programming will occur much later as part of a deliberate design process and will involve the collaboration and perspectives of key stakeholders. Though the formal planning process has concluded, the conversations continue."

Beck echoed Klapmeyer's point. She said, "I don't think they were prepared for the feedback. I think we've gotten such a strong response against this centralized dining hall that would take the place of the DMC, ALCC and Philosophy House."

Beck also emphasized the need for continued community engagement throughout the planning process. To Beck, "One of the most important parts of this process is to not give up hope…I think if the Hamilton community really stands up for the ideas that they believe in, in the end, we have a really good shot of seeing the Hamilton that we want to see."

To read more about and submit feedback for the Campus Master Plan, visit https://hamilton.engage.sasaki.com/

Experiential learning: broadening perspectives but lacking support

by Sydney Piccoli '26
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

Experiential learning, more colloquially defined as learning by doing, encompasses anything from research to domestic study abroad programs. These experiential learning opportunities can force students to wrestle with spheres of privilege and power, and enrich professional goals. Hamilton offers many different types of experiential learning programs on and off campus that are crucial to some students' education, but not without flaws.

Amy James, the Director of the Community Outreach, described what makes experiential learning unique. Sitting in a classroom and reading did not suit her active learning style. Once she started taking theater classes, some of the things she had been reading became very real to her. James remarked, "Are you reading *Death of a Salesman,* or are you designing and building a set for *Death of a Salesman*? I guarantee you, if I design and build a set, I'll never forget the play because I had my hands on it."

James also detailed how experiential learning helps cement what people are learning inside the Hamilton classroom. She said, "If you're coming from a position where you're [at Hamilton], and you're just talking in the abstract about people running out of food stamps, you don't know what that really means until you're at Hope House [a soup kitchen in Utica] and it's the end of the month, and the place is jammed." Experiential learning allows students to see the systemic injustices they may be studying in a classroom materialize in front of their eyes.

Casey Weisberg '26 participated in the Justice Lab focused on immigration and asylum, where she described the significance of learning outside the classroom. She said, "We went on field trips to the refugee center and the Oneida Cultural Center. We talked to people in the Utica government and spoke to refugees about their experiences."

Weisberg reflected, "I remember once we spoke to some refugees from South Sudan. One of them was taken away from their parents very young and forced to be a part of the army when he was still a kid. Hearing it from the people who actually experienced it was much more meaningful than reading about in a classroom," she remarked. "It's not just something you study in a classroom. It's people's lives."

Mary Hurner '24, the President of AXB, a COOP Senior Fellow, and a two-time Justice Lab participant, also described how powerful experiential learning can be. She said, "What interests me about public policy is these issues we're seeing in the world and what potential solutions can be used to address [them] in the most efficient and effective way. Within that, you inherently need to be exposed to these issues in a real world setting."

Hurner said, "If you're just talking about that in the classroom, in the abstract form, it's like, okay, we're talking about this, but what does that actually look like? In policy work, you need to have an understanding of the issues. I feel like experiential learning is the only way to do that."

Maddie Carrera, Hamilton's First Director of Experiential Learning, added, "while you are not necessarily going through these hunger issues or poverty issues or navigating a system that is not set up for you to succeed, you have access to and can work through those scenarios in ways a classroom scenario or article cannot."

Many students noted that experiential learning was important in conceptualizing their own privilege at an institution like Hamilton. Sae Gleba '24, who is currently in the experiential learning class American Freedom and Religious Thought, talked about Hamilton's privilege, coining it a "bubble," but one that experiential learning helps pop.

She said, "I know everyone says Hamilton is such a bubble, but it literally is. I think that seeing outside of that bubble is incredibly important." Weisberg echoed these sentiments and explained, "I think what made the Justice Lab special was really connecting with the community outside of our little Hamilton bubble. The people that surround us in Clinton and Utica make this

"If you're just talking about [policy] in the classroom, in the abstract form, it's like, okay, we're talking about this, but what does that actually look like? In policy work, you need to have an understanding of the issues. I feel like experiential learning is the only way to do that."
- Mary Hurner '24

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Students involved with HAVOC make mittens for donations to local charities.

area what it is."

Hurner also focuses on popping the Hamilton "bubble" through AXB trips in addition to coursework. She said, "I don't know if I'd ever go to Greensboro, [North Carolina] if I weren't on an AXB trip. We got to go to the Civil Rights Museum and learn so much about the refugee community there. It's very similar, but also differs in certain ways from the Utica system of support for refugees." She described, "It also gives a different perception of the South. They're really welcoming to refugees. I feel like we think we know America and the reality is there's so much more to learn about America."

Hurner said, "Coming from this college on a hill, we're inherently separate. But, being aware of your place and interacting genuinely with people and asking questions about their work is the most important thing." She said, "There's so much that we can learn if we just stay intentional and ask questions. There's a way to build connection and community."

However, Carrera expressed how Hamilton students are not always emotionally and mentally prepared for some experiential learning opportunities. "You are being put in different spaces and being asked to think in different ways." She described how this can be shocking for some students, "you are being shown that your expectations of

the world are not actually accurate. That can be really hard to face especially if everything up until this point has been really cookie-cutter."

This barrier could potentially be mitigated through training components, which some of Hamilton's experiential learning opportunities lack. Abby Foran '26 volunteers at Thea Bowman, a nonprofit daycare and preschool in Utica. She described, "[HAVOC} just asked people that were interested [in volunteering], and they assumed that people going to school have good manners… and provide help with homework and interact with kids. They did not do any sort of civic preparatory training or material, [we] just kind of showed up."

When asked if she felt well equipped to go into a school like Thea Bowman, she remarked: "Well-equipped is a tough term to use because of the idea of not being specifically trained to work in an environment like this. I grew up in a very different environment than these kids." She remarked that, "I cannot say that I am well-equipped, but we're not expected to really do anything revolutionary. Just help in any way we can. Give our time to something that's hopefully creating some good and making lives easier for many people."

Carrera detailed the need to take time to reflect before entering an organization to volunteer. She said it is important to reflect on "What do you expect? Why do you expect to see those things or to have these encounters? Did your reality meet your expectations? Why or why not? What can you take to that in going through both in connectivity to your course, but also for you as a person? Where is your place, and how are you connected there too?"

Although experiential learning is important, some of the programs, most notably domestic study abroad, provide a lack of support to their students. Hannah Jablons '24, who participated in the Hamilton in New York program in Spring of 2023, described their difficulty obtaining internships. They said, "You have to get these internships completely on your own. [Hamilton College personnel] tell you that the Career Center helps, but they don't."

Jablons detailed how it even got to the point where people arrived in NYC without an internship: "Some people even came into the program without internships, and then hopped on to other people's internships. It was really, really, really frustrating."

Similarly, Hamilton did not support Breeze Petty '24 in obtaining an internship for their study abroad semester in DC. They said, "The Washington program is like, we'll make sure you get an internship, right? Every Hamilton student has gotten an internship."

However, in reality Petty said, "So then, I've applied to probably like 20 internships. I go to the professor that's going to DC with us while we're still here at Hamilton [but] I didn't get an internship interview until I was literally headed to the airport to move to DC. I did my interview in the airport and then when I landed, I got the job offer. And the only place I could get a job offer was my home[state] Republican senator."

Despite these struggles in obtaining internships, some Hamilton students had immersive internships. Jablons worked as an investigative intern for the New York County Defender Services. They noted their internship was particularly helpful as they were the only spring intern from January to May. As a result, they could really receive special attention as well as become more invested in their organization's mission.

"Sometimes, there was a lot for me to do and then sometimes there was nothing for me to do and I could go to court or wander over to the social work department and ask them questions or have lunch with the CEO because he was in the break room and I got an early lunch," Jablons described.

Petty's internship was similarly immersive. They described, "When Russia invaded Ukraine, I had been working really close to the ledge assistant who was doing international relations. The two of us just tried to go to every single one of the briefings they had about Russia Ukraine and try to piece it together for the senator. So I went to a bunch of super cool classified and declassified briefings about it."

That being said, Petty's but their roommate did not have a very rewarding internship experience. Petty said, "his job was literally to answer the phone and get coffee. You have to learn how the senator or the congressman likes their coffee. And if you get the order wrong, you're probably going to get fired. " They continued,"I had way more responsibility than he did, which is something I would not have gotten if I was working for a Democrat. I was invited to meetings I most certainly should not have been invited to, like interviewing FEC candidates."

Although Petty's internship was immersive, they struggled working for a Senator who they did not share political ideology with. They said, "My intern coordinator boss sent me to this secret Republican meeting about *Roe v. Wade* off campus at this unmarked building where Republicans hang out. I was taking notes about how this is a huge Republican victory and…I had this realization that I was on the bad side of history in this room. When I got back from that meeting, I handed my notes in along with my letter of resignation."

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Students participating in the NYC-Hamiton program visit Lincoln Center.

Additionally, the classroom component of these domestic study abroad programs can offer unique learning experiences for students. Jablons said, "A lot of our class meetings we'd meet and then [Professor Isserman] would just bring in a friend that he knew and did activism with. And that person would be famous activist Bettina Aptheker and the authors of the books we were reading like Joshua Freeman."

However, during Petty's DC program, they described being overwhelmed by their work, instead of immersed in rewarding classes. They said that instead of having a check-in class as expected, "The professor told us to do research about inequality at different levels on top of the fact that we were all working 40 hours a week and trying to do homework for her other class."

Many of the experiential learning programs also struggle to address access to necessary resources. Jablons said, "You cannot access mental health resources and also can't access a lot of the other resources that Hamilton offers.

The New York City program tries to supplement this, not mental health wise, but academically, they give access to the New York Public Library." Hamilton's provision of academic support, but not mental health support, raises questions of whether or not the institution is prioritizing emotional support, especially given the taxing nature of many experiential learning programs. Petty expanded on this lack of access, describing how "You get told before you go on these sort of programs that the Counseling Center is not available to you, which is really hard especially if you are seeing a provider connected to Hamilton College."

Aside from these many difficulties in domestic abroad programs, Hamilton's experiential learning did provide opportunities for students to foster personal growth. Jablons said, "I became comfortable in the city. I know people who were on my program who weren't from the city or had never stepped foot in the subway before."

Carrera described how faculty praise the NYC and DC programs for their high-equality education and living-learning community, which often differs from what students get out of the programs. She said, "All of our students talk about how awesome it was to learn…that [they] can actually take care of [themselves] in a big city, to learn that [they] have recognized that this city is not what [they] thought it was going to be, how amazing it is that [they] test drove what I wanted to do for my career." She said, many students realize, "'I can do this,' which is really fulfilling."

Lastly, Jablons and Hurner articulated how their experiential learning opportunities have impacted their lives, including their plans for after graduation. Jablons said, "My thesis topic is about the history of New York City, which I probably wouldn't have done if I hadn't done this program. I'm also relying 85% of my interview material on the internship I did through the New York City program. It's the only tangible experience I have in my field."

Similarly, Hurner's Justice Lab experiences exposed her to how difficult it is to navigate complex bureaucratic systems and really create change in those systems. She said, "My experiential learning also gave me hope that there are people at all levels, especially at the local level, who are advocating for change in their own communities. All those experiences have led me to be more interested in local issues, which is where I'm trying to focus my work as I go forward."

James believes that there is beauty and growth in experiential learning. She said, "[Experiential learning] gives you a really realistic view of what is needed, what is possible, what's broken. But, I also hope that you find out what's beautiful about that community. They really care for each other. There's a place for people to go if you have nowhere to go."

Professors debate the German polycrisis along domestic and international lines

by Gregoire Winston '26
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Thursday, April 25, 2024, students, faculty, staff and members of the community came together to attend "The German Polycrisis", an event sponsored by the Levitt Center. The afternoon lecture featured Henry Platt Bristol Professor of International Relations Alan Cafruny alongside Professor of Economic History at Cornell University, Nicholas Mulder. The discussion was moderated by Visiting Assistant Professor of German Michael Lipkin.

At the start of the talk, Mulder began by breaking down in what ways the polycrisis has affected the German state For one, Mulder pointed out the German economy's recent struggles following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He uses wages and purchasing power and quantitative evidence: "For 9 years, there has not been an increase in purchasing power. With wages consistently kept low and the 2022 energy spike, it was going to inevitably lead to inflation." From a political standpoint, Mulder highlights the impact former Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel had on domestic politics: "Initally, Merkel comes accross as a tame person, but she was known to be ruthless with politicians. She would surround herself with people who were powerful but who could not challenge her due to previous scandals. Upon her departure, she has created an important vaccum of power."Beyond Merkel's influence, Mulder sees "concensus politics," which he describes as "slow moving", as a problem to address. Ideed, the German Supreme Court, for instance, was based upon a model that effectively limited how proactive domestic government could be. In this, Mulder sees a hurdle which has been used by German Far Right groups to gain in popularity. In consequence, German politics have witnessed progressive splintering and tension. Finally, taking into consideration geopolitics, Germany's growing friction with China on the global market is also a potential sign of worry. Mulder states: "China has been good at taking over markets that Germany was once in control, such as electric vehicles."

PHOTO COURETSY HAMILTON COLLEGE

Professor Alan Cafruny discussed the recent German polycrisis.

Cafruny prefaced his speech by arguing that "secular Europe is quickly fadinh away, and the situation we are in today is frighteningly similar to that of the Weimar Republic." Discussing German economics, Cafruny used the term "sanction boomerang" to discuss the adverse efffects German sanctions on Russia have had domestically. Despite trying to hurt Russia, it stood strong and overcame these economic obstacles. Focusing on Russia's resilience, Cafruny summed up his argument by stating "Both Biden and McCain have vowed to destroy Russia if it went against world peace, but the Kremlin has remained strong. Russia always seems to be loosing the war; until they're not."

In the end, both professors took into account German's domestic and international concerns from opposing perspectives, providing audiences with valuable insight.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Prof. Nicholas Mulder presented his insight.

Hamilton alum builds school in Georgia

by David W. Rivera and Sharon Werning Rivera
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GOVERNMENT, SIDNEY WERTIMER PROFESSOR OF GOVERNMENT AND DIRECTOR OF RUSSIAN STUDIES

*The authors would like to thank Nicolai Tolstoy '25 for valuable suggestions that significantly improved this article.

In 2004, an international student from the Republic of Georgia, a state that didn't even exist just thirteen years earlier, enrolled at Hamilton College. Three and a half years later, that student completed a Senior Project in the Government Department that investigated the relationship between a country's educational system and its prospects for democracy. His experience writing his thesis provided him with an inspiration that would determine his future life trajectory. The ensuing story is a testament to the ability of a Hamilton education to enable a student to make a positive difference in the world.

That student's name is Giorgi Chavleishvili, and this past Nov. we traveled to Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, to evaluate a study abroad program for Hamilton's Office of Global Learning. While there we took advantage of the opportunity to check in on Giorgi and see for ourselves what had become of him. But first some background on this remarkable young man.

Giorgi's story begins (at least in our telling) when he was just twelve years old. Today he stands a towering 6'5", but what is amazing is the following. "I was my current height," he told us, "At twelve years old and then I stopped growing!" Being a smart kid, Giorgi wisely decided to take up basketball. His excellence at the sport soon provided him with the opportunity to travel the world. His first stop was Fishburn Academy, a high school located in a small town in Virginia, where he enrolled as a sophomore in 2001. He was then recruited to play for a different high school—St. Anne Bellfield, also in Virginia—which he helped to win its first ever championship.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID RIVERA

At Hamilton, Chavleishvili was on the varsity basketball team.

Giorgi's next stop was Clinton, NY, where he entered Hamilton as both a basketball recruit and an Opportunity Programs (OP) student. Giorgi remains grateful to both that program and Hamilton for their support. He believes that without the generous financial aid he was offered, he would not have been able to attend the college. As he told us, "My mother was making $300 per month at the time." Moreover, Phyllis Breland, the Director of Opportunity Programs during Giorgi's time at Hamilton, recalls that he "really appreciated the structure of OP, creation of community and appreciation for the ethnic riches." In addition, she adds that he "was so positively impacted with the OP model, that he utilized portions of it for his school." In addition to playing basketball, Giorgi also worked as an RA for three years and for Audiovisual Services for all four years of his time at Hamilton.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID RIVERA

Chavleishvili was part of the Hamilton Opportunity Programs.

Fast forward to the spring of 2008 when Giorgi selected Professor Sharon Rivera's section of the Government 550: Senior Project seminar, which is dedicated to assisting Government and World Politics majors complete their required senior projects. That course was where Giorgi laid the groundwork and sketched out his plans for his future life's work. Sharon recalls that Giorgi expressed a desire to build on his research from the previous summer by further investigating educational reform in his native Georgia. He clearly had a passion for the liberal arts model of education—and both of the authors of this article are of the opinion that students should write their senior theses on subjects about which they are passionate. Although Giorgi's subject was promising and policy-relevant, Sharon insisted that his thesis had to relate more directly to comparative politics since that was the topic of the seminar. Giorgi fervently desired for his country to become a consolidated liberal democracy, so he ultimately settled on an exploration of attitudes that Georgia's traditional Soviet-era educational system lacked—such as tolerance and open mindedness—but that were required for democracy to fully take root in his home country.

Giorgi's experience writing his thesis inspired him, and already then he was formulating plans to go back to Georgia and set up a school modeled on the liberal arts tradition. Right after graduation, in fact, Giorgi returned to his native country and immediately set about making his dream a reality. One of his first steps was to enlist the assistance of his mother, who had previously worked as a pediatrician and had since transitioned to a job in the Children's Assistance Section, a governmental agency devoted to protecting children's rights. Sharing his dream, Giorgi's mother quit her job in order to work with her son full-time on launching the school.

Fast forward again, this time to 2024, and, after years of

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID RIVERA

Chavleishvili proudly displays a Hamilton banner and his Hamilton diploma behind his desk at Logos Academy.

ing blood, sweat and tears into it, the school that Giorgi founded—Logos International Academy—has grown from just 22 students in 2010 into an educational complex that enrolls 510 students from pre-K through grade 12 today. According to its mission statement, one of the Academy's main goals is to prepare Georgian high school students "to continue their studies in the leading universities of Georgia and the world"—just as its founder did. Giorgi reports that 100 percent of Logos's graduates go on to college and 60 percent go abroad to study. Indeed, the Logos website states that "380 students [have] graduated from the school, 212 of them enrolled in various prestigious universities of the world." Three of those students, in fact, have attended Hamilton! Anticipating our question about a potential brain drain inherent in this educational model, Giorgi remarked that almost all of Logos's students come back to Georgia after graduation.

During a long conversation in his office, we also learned many more things about Logos. For instance, the school currently employs 170 teachers and staff, which affords them a student-to-teacher ratio of 4:1 and small classes that are capped at sixteen students. Tuition is one-third to one-sixth the price of comparable private schools in Georgia. By keeping tuition low, Logos aims to demonstrate that even Georgians of modest means can attend college abroad. Moreover, Giorgi's overarching goal is to prepare students with practical skills that will enable them to handle everything they will encounter at a Western university—not just in the academic realm but also in regard to social life. The school's focus on college prep was immediately evident to us on our visit: during our tour of the school, we happened to come across a one-on-one session at which a guidance counselor was helping a student identify colleges that might be a good fit.

Also evident to us was that Giorgi and his team at Logos bring an enthusiastic attitude and cosmopolitan spirit to their students every day. Given how much Georgians both want to be a part of Europe and adore the United States (in this regard, EU, American and NATO flags can be found in most of Tbilisi's ubiquitous street graffiti), these traits undoubtedly represent some of the keys to the school's success.

Giorgi has drawn on his experience in the United States in more ways than one. We asked him about the school's recycling collection area that we had noticed. He replied, "Recycling is not common in Georgia, but Logos is trying to instill the practice. Every few weeks the staff brings these recycling bins to the factory."

Since its founding a decade and a half ago, Logos has been renting space for its classrooms, libraries and recreation areas.One of Giorgi's great sources of pride is the construction of a new building that will be ready to

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID RIVERA

The U.S. and NATO flags represent one example of the city's ubiquitous street graffiti.

house the school this coming fall. He took us on a tour of the building, which is located in a less populated portion of the city and thus will provide the students with much more open space. (And, yes, more than a little of this space will be filled with basketball courts!)

Upon returning to the Hill from our travels in Georgia, we are more convinced than ever that Continentals can make the world a better place. Sometimes they even do so on the other side of the world.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID RIVERA

Professors Sharon Rivera and David Rivera accompany Giorgi and his wife, Ani, to the construction site of Logos Academy's new building.

Advice Column: spring flings and C&C Day

by Sarafina Madden '26
FEATURES EDITOR

Classes are wrapping up and this seems to be the time when I need to be most focussed and on top of my work. How am I ever supposed to stay focused with all of the end of the year festivities and sunny weather?

We get it. This is the time of year when Hamilton starts to feel more like summer camp than school. History readings, Econ problem sets and Chemistry labs seem entirely irrelevant. Final exams are distant dates in your Google calendars. First of all, give yourself grace. Take time to spend time with your friends outside. Go on glen walks, run on G-Road, play on Minor field—I promise those are the memories you'll remember. We are so lucky to go to school in such a beautiful place and you deserve to enjoy these moments. Plain old fun is an equally important component of your education—I often learn more in casual conversation with my friends than I do in formal lectures. To help yourself stay on track, when you do actually sit down to study for exams and write final papers, stay away from friends. I know it's hard but sometimes the 3rd floor of the library is the best move. When it's time to lock in, lock in for real and then reward yourself with playtime and outdoor fun.

How should I recover from C&C day this weekend?

The forecast for this weekend is looking rainy. This is the perfect opportunity to cozy up inside. Have a movie night with friends, make a charcuterie board, do the NYT crossword with a group of friends, have a friend give you a haircut, make a Pinterest mood board, make a final assignment schedule, go for a walk to Utica Coffee or Cremeria, check out Thrifty Shopper in New Hartford or Peter's Cornucopia for healthy and organic treats. On campus, there's lots going on. Sunday, Outing Club leaders have organized a trip to hike in the Adirondacks—this is a great opportunity to get in touch with nature before you hit the ground running with final work. On Saturday, at 1 p.m., head to the Wellin to explore the new "Make, Touch, Kiss" exhibition. Keep the support for Hamilton art coming by attending the student soloist concert in Wellin Hall on Saturday night at 6 p.m. If you're feeling a little delicate after Friday's festivities, make sure you take care of your body. Make yourself some tea or soup, watch a movie in bed and get a good night's sleep. Get the rest that you need to get through the homestretch.

It feels like everyone has some fun little spring fling going on but me. It's all anyone talks about these days. What should I do to stay grounded?

It's true. Situationships and relationships alike seem to be at the center of conversations these days. It's hard to be genuinely happy for friends who have found romantic success as a single person trying to mingle. It's important to remember, though, that as much as romantic exploration is a joyous part of college, college is also a perfect time for introspection and time alone. Relish in your singlehood. Embrace the uncertainty of your romantic future and also spend time reflecting on how wonderful you are as an individual. Without the responsibilities that come with a relationship, you have the mental capacity to enjoy the things that you love to do. There's no one to report back to or keep in the loop about your life. As much as romantic relationships are fun and fulfilling, you are so lucky to have this time to develop as an individual. Nurture your friendships and relationships with your family. It's easy to lose sight of how valuable non-romantic relationships are when everyone seems focused on finding a romantic partner. I would argue that friendships are the most important relationships in life. Your friends, unlike family and romantic partners, are the only people you truly choose to have as a part of your life with no motive except for your true love for them as people. Also, it's so much better to be on your own than with someone who doesn't bring you joy. You are yourself before you are someone's romantic partner. Go blast "Single Ladies" and buy yourself a Fojo treat—it's just going to be you at the end of the day.

It seems like everyone has their people here. I love my friends and feel socially fulfilled but am looking to meet new people. How can I make new friends?

It's never too late to meet new people here. An easy go-to for making new friends is asking people in classes or acquaintances to grab a meal. But, if you're looking to find friends more organically, consider joining a new club or applying for a job. There are so many niche communities at Hamilton. Check out Hamilton's Debate Society or Philosophy club to find people who are engaging in heated intellectual debate. Don't forget about the Outing Club. Hiking trips are a great way to bond and meet new people. I know it can feel awkward, but sometimes complimenting someone's outfit is a great way to break the ice. I promise, putting yourself out there and starting conversation will only be rewarded. End the year strong by expanding your circle and get excited about all the new friendships that await you when we return in the fall (or beyond Hamilton, if you're graduating).

PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAFINA MADDEN '26

Hamilton students play frisbee and spike-ball on Minor Field this past fall.

Misleading diversity on social media

by Archer Fried-Socarides '27
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

As a predominantly white institution with around 73% of Hamilton students identifying as caucasian, some community members raise the question whether Hamilton accurately represents that statistic via social media.

Tarun Kowar '27, an international student from India who plays on the tennis team, explained the way he views Hamilton's social media: "As an international student, I couldn't visit campus; I couldn't physically come to see the school. I feel like overrepresentation, or not accurately representing the people that actually go here, doesn't necessarily do me an injustice, but at the same time, you get here and it's not what you expect." Kowar's observations have strong practical implications: an overrepresentation on social media is an overrepresentation to all those looking in from the internet.

Hamilton College maintains a large following on social media, with over 34 thousand combined X and Instagram followers. Out of these followers, there are students, parents, prospective students, alumni, faculty, media and educational partners. Chloe Cullen '27 said, "Because we are a small liberal arts college in upstate New York, a lot of the rest of the world might not know a lot about us, so their actions on social media are always going to be performative in some ways."

Cullen noted that Hamilton's use of hashtags on their Instagram posts creates a reach much wider than just their followers. Users who merely follow the hashtag "#college" or "campus life" will be able to easily access all of Hamilton's photos. Cullen said, "People manipulate their posts with hashtags to make their reach wider. I'm sure their hashtags are curated to reach people the College wants to connect with, which a lot of the time is prospective students."

Prospective students, particularly international students, as Kowar points out, are susceptible to what they see the school has posted online. Kowar describes: "I want more students of color to come to Hamilton, so in that way, the overrepresentation of minority students on social media seems like a good thing. But you also get the feeling that the school is setting a trap for these minority students. I remember looking at Colgate for tennis, and being turned off by the fact that their whole tennis team was white." While Kowar agreed that the school is ultimately misrepresenting their demographics, he recognized it is ultimately part of an effort to grow their diversity in the future.

Jun Reiss '26, also spoke to the harm of overrepresentation. He said, "It's hurtful to

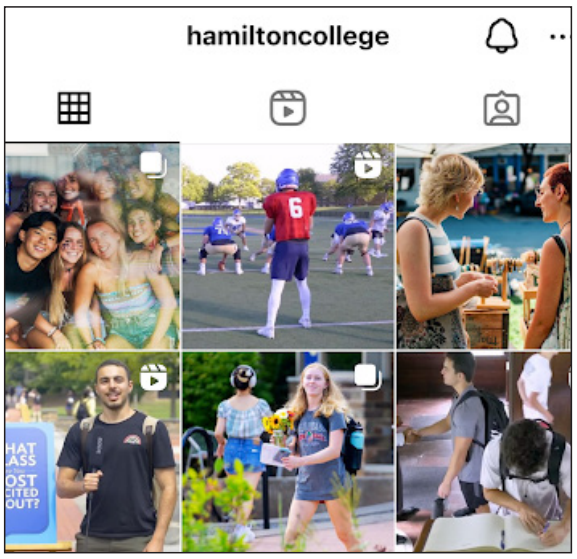

PHOTO COURETSY HAMILTON COLLEGE INSTAGRAM

Hamilton's Instagram displays campus life.

minority students in the sense that they're being lied to: they're being told there's this picture of diversity at this school, and they see visually that there are these people that look like them, but it's not true. All of a sudden, they come here, and everyone is much more white than them, so they feel more unsafe."

Reiss notes that, although this misrepresentation could be an attempt to recruit a more diverse student population, this relationship creates a sense of mistrust. "You shouldn't lie to minority students; you shouldn't make your problem their problem. It's not their job to solve these institutional systemic issues for you. You have to come up with better solutions."

Reiss expanded on how Hamilton's institutional goals to increase diversity can prove harmful to minority students: "It's helpful on broad levels and hurtful on individual levels. It's helpful in the institution's goal to attain higher diversity of higher education, which is good for minority students."

Kowar talked about how what's happening on social media is not the most pressing issue for students of color, but rather the lack of opportunities for minority students on campus. He said, "There's not much done. And I would never point fingers at groups of people, but as a student of color, there are opportunities we lack that other students have, and I really feel like that's taken for granted on campus."

Reiss, similarly to Kowar, believes that while the College often makes an effort for its minority students, it should be doing more. "The school does just enough," stated Reiss, "but minority students on campus do not feel represented or safe. That's why there's this space called the Days-Massolo Center that a lot of white people don't even know about. A lot of minority students spend all their time there because that's the only place on campus where they feel safe."

Reiss further elaborated on Hamilton's relationship with minority students. He said, "I know I said they do enough, but it's only enough for the institution, not for the minorities." Reiss said that the actions carried out by the school for minority students feel alien to them in some ways. He said that often Hamilton promotes minority student life in ways that are meant to ultimately promote the institution, not individual students.

Rebecca Castaneda Leffler, a professor of government at Hamilton, shares Reiss' opinions on actions without meaning when it comes to minority overrepresentation on social media. She said, "While I think representation is powerful, if not coupled with policies and practical action, it can ring hollow for students. It can also make it appear that issues of diversity and inclusion have been largely resolved and should no longer be a focus." Like Reiss, Leffler recognizes that institutions have ways of promoting themselves in a way that unfairly uses their students.

Kowar highlighted some ways in which he believed the school could – and has been – doing a better job supporting students of color. He said, "Venus Williams is coming on campus, and I've been given an opportunity to ask questions to her because I'm an athlete of color – which I think is a really good step. Things like that make you feel like, even though you're in a small community, you're still cared for. Small things like that make a difference."

Despite some of these opportunities, Reiss still feels that the large structures of inequality remain unaddressed. He notes, "If Hamilton did more for minority students, I would have a tendency to give them the benefit of the doubt more, which in turn would allow me to give them the benefit of the doubt when it comes to overrepresentation on social media."

Leffler agreed and said, "good intentions are not sufficient. I think the school should listen to students to learn how to best support them. I also think creating more opportunities for students to connect with faculty of color can be invaluable."

Cullen spoke of how Hamilton seems to prioritize long-term institutional goals for diversity instead of the actual wellbeing of current students. She said, "The school is putting on a facade and is making them seem like something greater than they are."

My preliminary analysis of the various public bathrooms at Hamilton College

by Tristan Sollecito '25
STAFF WRITER

This has been three years in the making. Those who know me are familiar with my quest to chronicle the Hamilton College public bathrooms and rank them from best to worst. And it will be done. Unfortunately, I have not yet had the opportunity to collect all of the requisite data, and despite my resistance to publish any premature analysis, it appears I have been convinced. I kindly request your sensitivity and grace as I attempt to preview the complete guide, a guide that, rest assured, will be published in its entirety before I graduate. I all but pledge to visit and use every single non-residential bathroom in an effort to provide the student body with an all-encompassing, indisputable blueprint that outlines the best and worst lavatories on campus. Here is what I have so far, a provisional top and bottom five:

WORST:

5. Library, 24-Hour Room (Private)
Ambiance: D
Privacy: B+
Cleanliness: C-
Amenities: D

The lone private bathroom to crack the bottom 5, though it appears the original design intended for it to accommodate multiple patrons at the same time. The locking system is bizarre, especially for a lavatory with a stall in it and there is far from adequate sink space with the divider and paper towel dispenser closing in on either side. And what's with the toilet? Unless it was built specifically for the basketball team, I still have not quite figured out why it is so uncomfortably high off the ground. It is dark and dingy, especially at night, but at least it is clean and somewhat peaceful, which cannot be said for some of the others on this list.

4. Field House, Basement—Rink Side (Semi-Private)
Ambiance: D
Privacy: B+
Cleanliness: C-
Amenities: D

You really come out a different person after a trip to the Field House Rink bathroom. Poorest design of any lavatory by a country mile; the one massive sink is an eye sore and the faucet only works at half capacity. The larger stall's accessibility pole takes up half of the already tight space, and the urinal flush handles are uncommonly high off the ground. Privacy is the only attractive quality here, but unlike some of the lesser known bathrooms, I think there's a reason why there isn't much competition for these toilets.

3. CJ, 2nd Floor (Semi-Private)
Ambiance: D
Privacy: D+
Cleanliness: F
Amenities: F

Green rust on the sink is not a great start, but for such an inept bathroom, there is hardly a privacy tradeoff to boost its value. The sink on the right is difficult to get to, crammed in by the paper towel dispenser that also happens to have a lever; why, I have no idea. If you have not been drinking your milk you might have trouble turning the four-pronged rotational faucet levers that almost require body weight to shut off. The toilet? Average at best, with a window in a bizarrely prominent spot inside the stall. The icing on the cake is the croaking front door that sounds exactly like the sea monster from *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.

2. Commons, Southside Balcony (Semi-Private)
Ambiance: D-
Privacy: F
Cleanliness: C-
Amenities: C-

I appreciate the sentiment of a second option in the ever-so-crowded dining hall, but these bathrooms are so dysfunctional that we might actually be better off without them. Having a bathroom adjacent to a dining area is unusual to begin with, and the tiny, non-private space has visitors shifting and maneuvering around doors and sinks. I would like to see some inviting qualities to balance out the awkwardness, but the stale pale ambiance does not provide any additional support.

1. Field House, Basement—Court Side (Public)
Ambiance: D+
Privacy: A-
Cleanliness: B
Amenities: D

I do not even know where to begin. Try not to let the respectable grades fool you; this looks like the site of a murder mystery. I have never seen a soul anywhere near this bathroom, and for good reason. For starters, one of the sinks does not shut off. The ones that do work are rusty and squeaky, pouring water out like a fire hose. The full sized urinals go all the way down to the floor and provide minimal privacy out in the open with no dividers. Just a lonely and desolate lavatory that makes me feel guilty every time I use it, knowing that it will probably never be cleaned. Honestly, it would probably be a waste of soap and time anyway.

BEST:

5. Events Barn, 1st Floor (Public)
Ambiance: B-
Privacy: B
Cleanliness: B-
Amenities: B

Absolute hidden gem that, while not quite worth going out of your way to visit, it dominates the Martin's Way region. It can get a bit gloomy in a somewhat dark and quiet environment, but the vibrant color scheme helps to offset a stuffy vibe and enhances its invitational potential. The sink area can get crowded so close to the door, though the sinks themselves provide a strong and consistent stream of water. Stalls are average on every level.

Continued onto next page...

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Overall, one of the most private public bathrooms on campus; during a major event at the Barn or the Annex it loses the majority of its allure, but during off peak hours it's a highly versatile option.

4. List, 2nd Floor (Private)
Ambiance: C
Privacy: B-
Cleanliness: B
Amenities: B+

Be careful before you serenade the List bathrooms with appreciation for their privacy; yes they are spacious and lockable, but with thumping footsteps right outside the door, you really do not get the piece and quiet of say a KTSA 2nd Floor. However, as private bathrooms go, it is impressively roomy and conducive to a healthy break in between classes, or dare I say even during class. I will say that it is in a high traffic area where frequent knocking can become a concern, but overall it really has everything you need and a door with a lock plus a strong flowing sink makes for a happy trip to the restroom.

3. KTSA, 2nd Floor (Public)
Ambiance: B+

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

The KTSA second floor bathroom garnered high scores in privacy, ambiance and cleanliness.

Privacy: A
Cleanliness: A
Amenities: C-

I know this one is atop many people's list, but I respectfully think it is a tad overrated. Privacy, yes. Cleanliness, yes. The one gargantuan stall is both spacious and comfortable, with elegant natural light but also supreme privacy. This bathroom is always in tip-top shape, cleaned thoroughly every day to enhance its modern architecture. The black chrome finish on the sinks is a nice touch, but sometimes the next-gen technology can work against it. The automatic flush is a huge con for me, and the 6-stream spray faucets feel weird on the skin and do not encourage a proper scrubbing technique. At the end of the day, I have to say it is tough to beat the combination of privacy and its sleek inviting feel.

2. Science Center, 3rd Floor - South Wing (Public)
Ambiance: C+
Privacy: A
Cleanliness: A-
Amenities: A-

It is difficult to differentiate between each Science Center bathroom on the South wing, but according to sources that I trust, the 3rd Floor lavatories are essentially private, very seldom used. I see the SC bathrooms as very comparable to KTSA second floor with a less vibrant ambiance but much better amenities. The toilet is sturdy with a manual flush, and the sink comes equipped with a nice flow of water operated by clean and lubricated faucet levers. The paper towel dispenser is always well-stocked with a large trash can that does not overflow. Nothing you are going to write home about, but a fantastic overall bathroom that more than covers the bases.

1.Root Hall, 2nd Floor (Private)
Ambiance: A+
Privacy: A-
Cleanliness: A
Amenities: B-

If you have not yet gotten the opportunity to immerse yourself in the wonders of the brand new Root bathrooms, do yourself a favor and change that immediately. These lockable private sanctuaries boast stunning green tiled walls and large blurred windows for both privacy and connection to the outside world. They are strategically isolated from the main study area to reduce foot traffic, fostering a peaceful and unbothered stay. My one knock is that the toilets are peculiarly close to the wall, which appears to be a mild gaff in the design. Exquisite bathroom all around, truly exquisite. I would not say it is a life-changing experience, but it is darn close.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

The Root Hall second floor private bathroom received the highest possible score for ambiance and an A for cleanliness.

The Hamilton College student housing problem should be fixed

by Nicolai Tolstoy ’27
STAFF WRITER

As many of us know, the Hamilton College housing situation is not at its best moment right now. Many rising sophomores will be placed in the so-called “forced double” in Bundy. These rooms were meant to be single rooms, but an increase in the number of students attending led them to be turned into double rooms. Many rising sophomores will be placed in these rooms, and many feel discontent with the situation. Daniel King ’27, a sophomore next semester, got put in a forced double and was unhappy that he now has to live down the hill for a year. Even though King will live with his friend next semester, some rising sophomores will not. Those who want to live single next semester but got unlucky in the time slot will have to room with someone else. Another problem with Bundy is the location. The dorms are far down the hill, which can pose a problem when the winter is in full swing.

Although many sophomores did get placed in Bundy, some did not. Depending on the time slot one got, you could get a dorm with a good location, which was made to be a double room. According to me, this is an unfair situation. Students who were excited to live better than they did in their freshman year might get even worse housing because of the over-enrollment caused by the admissions office.

While it is understandable that, in certain years, more students than expected will accept their offers to the College, the school should try to account for those unexpected events. Since there is a policy that requires all students to live on campus, investing in better housing could be a good idea. While this policy creates a good college environment, it also comes with responsibilities for the College. I understand that the College cannot have every student live like a senior every year, but it should aim to have students get better housing every year.

Furthermore, since housing is a big part of one’s college experience, I find it important that the College spend whatever necessary to make the student experience as good as possible. Of course, schools in the middle of a large urban area, no matter how much money they have, will have problems making housing much better. However, that is not the case for Hamilton.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Bundy East and West feature single rooms that have been turned into doubles because of space issues.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

The Bristol Center, usually a hotel and administrative building, has had its second floor turned into a dorm.

I believe a housing scenario where students enjoy better housing every year is important at a college. Understandably, everyone during their freshman year did not get their first-choice room/roommate; therefore, one could think they should live better as sophomores. Putting some freshmen in South Hall, a housing sought after by many, might not be the best decision.

Hamilton College’s housing situation illuminates yet another area in many areas affected by over-enrollment, from long queues during lunchtime to classes filling up. While these are important, housing is also important, and having to build the generally unpopular Glenview, putting people in Bristol, and forced-double in Bundy might be a sign that the school needs to invest in housing for today and tomorrow's students at Hamilton.

Some have discussed with me that people should pay different housing costs depending on where they live on campus. I believe this is wrong and would create a divide between people who can and can not afford better housing. A college is a place where everyone undergoes the beautiful experience of attending College, learning and living all under the same roof.

The housing situation at Hamilton is one area worth improving. While I understand the College has many areas it wants to improve, building new housing could be something that would help our next generation of Hamilton students.

Hamtrek: a breakdown of Hamilton's biggest race

by Patrick Cleary '24
SPORTS EDITOR

Last Friday, the Hamilton community came together for the annual Hamtrek triathlon. Athletes of all abilities competing across 525 yards of swimming, nine miles of biking and five kilometers of running. Most people writing about Hamtrek will tell you how hard they trained and the satisfaction of victory. That is not what this is. I participated in Hamtrek as a complete amateur as a biker and I had a great time. What I'm more concerned about is the physical course of the race. If you did not get a chance to participate this year, here's a walkthrough of what you can expect next year.

Part 1: The Swim

Lacking a clean, properly sized body of water, the swim portion of the race is held in Bristol Pool. Participants swim twenty-one lengths of the pool equating to roughly 525 yards. When I was there, the thing that stood out the most was the heat. The amount of people in the crowd and moisture in the air created a very humid room. Again, I'm not a swimmer, but if you are, it's a completely different experience to the rest of the race. As a runner and a biker, you spend a lot of time out on your own on that trail. There are the occasional spectator, and Hamtrek volunteer but you have the space to focus on the task at hand. Swimmers do not have that luxury. The room reverberates the sound right on top of you, there are spectators screaming everywhere, there are three swimmers to a lane and the next heat is warming up right on top of you. Also, you're in the same spot for the whole portion rather than seeing the landscape change around you as with the other portions of the competition. If you can handle all that, once your laps are done, you exit the pool, go across the lawn and reach the Dunham Lot.

Part 2: The Bike

This was my section of the race. If you choose not to use a spin bike, you grab your bike from the rack, and the race is back on. You take off from Dunham Lot and turn right onto G Road. Then another right onto Valley View Road, flanked by beautiful fields as you descend two sizable hills. After a quick turn onto Norton, there's another right onto Campus Road via a daunting hill. Turn right onto College Hill Road and then do it all over again. The real struggle here is knowing the course. Those downhill runs are nice to chill on but you're going to need that momentum once you hit the harder slopes. I made that mistake on my first lap but corrected the error on my second. Definitely scout the field before the big day. Otherwise, you'll be left puffing trying to make your way back to campus.

Part 3: The Run

Finally, the five kilometer run to finish off the competition. Upon exiting Dunham Lot, runners run through the track toward the back field, around the tennis courts and a circle around the baseball fields, followed by a large loop around the entirety of the back field. Finally, runners loop back around to the start of the course, finishing in a sprint on the track. For teams, the same advice applies from the bike. There are no mile markers, so you're pretty much on your own when it comes to pacing yourself. Again, study the course before you get out there. Especially as a solo competitor, it is very easy to gun it after the bike thinking this is the end when there are still 20+ minutes of pain left. Stick to these tips and you could find yourself becoming the next Hamtrek champion. If not, you'll still have lifelong memories of that time you almost beat your Econ professor at cycling.

PHOTO BY HAMILTON COLLEGE

The nine mile course takes cyclists across rolling hills on and off-campus.

PHOTO BY HAMILTON COLLEGE

The Bristol Pool kicks off the thrilling event.

Alex Garland's *Civil War* is too civil for its own good

by Maximo Bratter '25
A&E EDITOR

Some films are too big to fail, some are too small to succeed, and Civil War hits a boring middle ground between the two.

Writer-director Alex Garland is no newbie to taking on near-future hypotheticals that cash in on realistic fears. His work has even been prescient at times: in *28 Days Later* (2002), a disease causes empty streets and for the world to become hermits; *Ex Machina* (2014) (one of my favorite films ever) chillingly ponders over the question of sentience within artificial intelligence that we grapple now with more than ever. In *Civil War* though, Garland seems to be stuck in a gray area of not wanting to feed into realism so much so to reveal some ulterior political motive but does not lean into a surrealistic take on war (a la *Apocalypse Now* [1979]) that could provoke full-throated interpretations from all members of the ideological spectrum. Instead, *Civil War* is a nothing film that refuses to be thought-provoking but simultaneously encourages the audience to trust its vision when there is not one.

Civil War is led by Kirsten Dunst as the legendary war photojournalist Lee Smith. Along with her is Joel (Wagner Moura), an adrenaline-junky that feeds off the novelty of every shoot, and Sammy (Stephen McKinley), a physical embodiment of cautious legacy media. The film starts, and we get all the visual exposition we need to understand each character. Lee is hardened; she may as well be a veteran herself. Joel does not know when to stop pushing; this includes agreeing to allow young photojournalist Jessie (Cailee Spaeny) to tag along with them, even though she proved her unpreparedness after having to be saved by Lee in a near-death mob experience; worst of all, one that she did not even get pictures. And Sammy is a foil that tells the band of photographers that they are constantly overstepping the limits of what is safe.

The film quickly transitions into a road-trip structure, similar to that of Alexander Payne's *Nebraska* (2013), where each stop provides a moment for character-building or excitement. The stakes are just as high as the trip is far; the President (Nick Offerman) has agreed to give Lee and Joel what will likely be his final interview before being assassinated by the Western Forces. The Western Forces are a confusing amalgamation of states, including partisan polar opposites California and Texas, that have banded together to take down an autocratic leader who had just decided to take a third term in office. Beyond that, though, the motivations are vague. No character, main or extra, has a clear impetus for their actions beyond the primal instinct of how one guerilla military man describes it: shooting back merely because they are shooting at you. Survival is the name of the game in *Civil War,* and it is a lazy alternative to actually fleshing out who the war's actors are and what they are fighting for. We get to the final scene (which I will not spoil even though it is predictable), and there is an uneasy sense of indecision of what to do in a post-revolution world. It is a fitting tone for the conclusion of the film's aimless narrative.

Lee warns Jessie that as they get to each stop in their trip from New York City to Washington D.C., it will only get more dangerous. At one gas station, Lee has to bribe its defenders with an obscene amount of Canadian dollars just to refill their tanks. This is a world where America seems to be isolated and has lost its superpower status. One of the militants at the gas station walks with Jessie as she explores the location and finds two men strung up to an automatic car washer. But to her surprise, they are alive and Jessie's comfort of knowing that they are potentially in a peaceful afterlife turns to the realization that they must endure more of the living hell that is *Civil War*'s America. And the chaos of the country is infectious; another stop on the trip is a town that seems frozen in time and unaffected by the war. Joel sarcastically asks the cashier at a clothing store if she knows a war is going on, and she just responds that they do, but that it is more convenient to ignore it. Nonetheless, Sammy points out to Lee that the town is similarly under covert military control to protect this unpenetrated "peace." Then there is the famous Jesse Plemons sequence that captured my attention in what was generally a sorry trailer. Plemons plays a sadistic, rogue militant in a similar vengeful manner to his Todd from *Breaking Bad*, but the entire exchange was essentially revealed in the previews and has little in surprises otherwise. Plemons also serves as a forced and cringe-inducing symbol of current America's real partisanship when he evaluates who to kill based on what region they are from and chooses to kill a foreigner without deliberation. Not even *FOX News* would endorse this mentality.

Every one of these storyline checkpoints does nothing to invest the audience further into the narrative, though. They serve as mandatory moments of action, where clarification on the context behind this war never expands, and the characters remain as they were when they were first introduced. And maybe Garland intended to keep a close hand on why this war was happening because he felt it did not matter and that the Darwinian ethos of each mini battle that the cast endures was better left untouched. But it comes off as a film with so many ideas and propositions that wants to put the responsibility on the audience for developing them. Garland seems to voluntarily give up his creative agency in defining what this film even is.

It is disappointing to see a film this ambitious feel half-baked. It displays a perspective that is barely shown in war films. Most war films focus on the soldiers and victims and treat the complementary figures like medics, photojournalists, etc., as invisible, so to see war from a third-party lens (pun intended) is fresh. This is especially so in the captivating way that each military exchange is edited; scenes of activity are interspersed with still photos from the photographers capturing it. The general lack of score, sound and music in these sequences forces the audience to focus on the tactical nature of them as well. All we can hear are bullets, directives and the snapping of cameras. It is truly raw and gripping. But I cannot say that about most of *Civil War*, which is content to bloat itself with downtime and dialogue that goes nowhere.

Civil War is barely 100 minutes long but it feels double that because it does not capitalize on what it does creatively well. Garland opts for structural monotonous redundancy: fight, reflect, stop and talk, repeat. Consequently, character arcs and plotlines become spoon-fed to completion in order to get through the overarching plot. I have to believe that *Civil War* was murdered in the editing room because of how loosely impactful each scene feels on one another, but this is the film I watched and this is the film that I wish I did not.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MURRAY CLOSE/A24

***Civil War* could be on track for some Oscar nominations regardless of my opinion.**

Minds behind Hamilton media party at 7 Hamlets

by Katlynn Leon '25
A&E CONTRIBUTER

This past Saturday, April 27, WHCL partnered with on-campus publications, Signature Style and The Spectator, to bring the Hamilton College community to 7 Hamlets. If you somehow missed all of the emails, this was an off-campus live music event at 7 Hamlets Brewery, located only 7 minutes from campus at 26 Seymour Lane. The live music was performed exclusively by Hamilton College students. The lineup ranged from indie to jazz-funk to pop-rock covers. All of the bands were well-received as the nearly 200 attendees danced and drank to the rhythms.

The opening act was newly formed Handsome. The group performed for the first time at Sidney Gish's WHCL x CAB Acoustic Perfomance last week. At 7 Hamlets, Handsome changed up their setlist and included a keyboardist. They played Hozier, Bruno Mars and Phoebe Bridgers. With each song, Handsome heightened emotions with their raw and indie sound. Not to mention, all of the vocals were incredible. This is a little less surprising considering that all of the band members are a part of Hamilton College's youngest all-female and non-binary a capella group, Tumbling After. After Handsome's phenomenal performance at 7 Hamlets (having only been a group for a week), I honestly can't wait to see their future performances in the semesters to come.

Once Handsome closed their set, fan-favorite The Berriez took the stage. The pop-rock cover band pulled audiences to their feet for remixes of "Drunk in Love/Dream On" and "Zombie." As always, Isa Cardoso '25 used strong stage presence to encourage dancing and singing-along. The audience was so entranced by their performance that they chanted "One more song!" until The Berriez inevitably gave in. The encore of "Crazy Train/Applause" had the entire brewery shaking. From funky guitar riffs to jaw-dropping vocals, The Berriez proved once again why they are a must-see campus band.

To end the night, Frumptet played their iconic jazz-funk music. The crowd stayed on their feet bouncing around to their catchy beats. WHCL General Manager and Frumptet-enthusiast, Carter Megali '26 said, "Frumptet has my heart, and it broke a little to see them perform for the last time. What are we going to do now? I guess I gotta pick up the sax." For a final performance, Frumptet blew me away. They kept everyone moving and the vibes high, which can be difficult for a band playing such a niche genre with no lyrics.

The three bands flowed into one another seamlessly and built on the previous performance's energy. 7 Hamlets hosted an incredible night of fun live performances and dancing with great food and drinks. Since this is the last live music event before the Class & Charter Concert, I am excited to see where Handsome and The Berriez go next semester. As it is Frumptet's final performance, I can't wait to discover who will fill the Frumptet-sized hole in my heart.

WHCL, Signature Style and The Spectator worked together to create an incredible off-campus live music experience. This event was similar to the performances at Saranac Brewery that occurred earlier in the semester. The prospect of having consistent off-campus events where transportation is provided has the potential to truly shift the nightlife scene on campus. Local breweries and venues will benefit from the influx of spending and newfound awareness amongst the college student population. On top of that, students have been complaining for years about feeling restricted to our hill. Henry Gooding '24, The Berriez groupie, when asked about his experience at 7 Hamlets, said, "I hope there are more events there. I think the accessibility for anyone to be able to go was cool. Off-campus band concerts are such a good idea that should happen more!" While Henry is just one person, his feelings are echoed throughout this campus.

As the semester comes to an end, I hope we can reflect on the great memories we made at 7 Hamlets and continue to plan similar music-related events on and off campus in the coming semesters.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LIZZIE HERR '24

The Spectator **made their presence known at 7 Hamlets.**

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Hamilton College spring sports roundup

by Owen Lewis '24
SPORTS EDITOR

Women's tennis: The Continentals moved to 7-8, 3-7 within the NESCAC, with an abbreviated 5-0 win over Bates on April 29. Hannah Apsey '25 and Stephanie Pratt '25 won the top doubles match in a whitewash, 8-0. In the second spot, partners Priyanka Challapalli '27 and Hannah Walpole '26 rebounded from a huge 1-6 deficit to complete a thrilling comeback win, 8-6 in a tiebreak. Grace Qian '27 and Samantha Rainero '26 rounded out the doubles clean sweep with a comfortable 8-2 win. Singles players Qian and Shannon Cicero '25 won completed matches. The other singles contests were unfinished.

Men's tennis: Hamilton lost heavily to Tufts, 8-1, on Apr. 28. Connor Griff '25 and Gianni Esposito '24 partnered to win a doubles match, scoring Hamilton's lone point with an 8-3 victory. Griff lost his singles contest to Vuk Vuksanovic, 6-4, 6-4. The team is now 7-10 overall and 1-8 within the NESCAC.

Men's golf: The men's golf team was just six strokes short of Tufts for the NESCAC championship title on April 28. They completed the two-day event with a team total of 593 strokes, barely over Tufts' winning score of 587. Ramon Aroca Gonzalez '26 tied for fourth place in the 50-golfer field and Ryan Connors '25 tied for sixth. Tyler Tornoe '25 and Will Whittaker '25 rounded out the Continentals' top four by tying for 12th and 16th, respectively. Given that none of the aforementioned players are seniors, next season has the potential to be even better.

Women's track and field: Hamilton finished last among eleven teams at the NESCAC Track & Field Championships on Apr. 27 but recorded several impressive individual performances. Hannar Turner '26 set a team record in the 400-meter hurdles in 1:04.84, breaking the previous mark by almost a full second. Dana Schwartz '26 also set a team record in the javelin, recording a distance of 36.68 meters.

Men's track and field: The men's team also finished eleventh out of eleven teams at the NESCAC Championships. Peter Cuomo '24 and Jack Quinn '27 shone in individual events, with Cuomo getting fifth in the long jump and Quinn racing to seventh in the steeplechase, a distance hurdling event.

PHOTO BY JOSH MCKEE

Jesse Delinsky '26 recently won Division III Player of the Week in lacrosse.

Baseball: The Continentals romped to a 14-5 win over Utica in the 34th edition of the Jackie Robinson Classic. Hamilton owns an 18-16 edge in the series. The game got off to a quick start with the Continentals scoring four runs in the first inning, punctuated by a three-run homer from the bat of Michael Tallarida '26. Utica closed the gap to 6-4 by the end of the fourth inning, but from there, Hamilton outscored their rivals 10-1. The Continentals are now 13-13 on the season.

Softball: The Continentals fell to 16-17 with a 6-3 loss to Utica on Apr. 28. Hamilton scored a run in the opening inning and made a late surge in the sixth while keeping Utica scoreless for the final three innings, but it was too little, too late to make up for a five-run deficit. The second game of the planned doubleheader was rained out.

Men's lacrosse: In the quarterfinals of the NESCAC Championship, the Continentals scored a big upset win, 14-13, over top-seeded Tufts. Jesse Delinsky '26 delivered the game-winning goal in overtime. Hamilton got off to a quick start, racing to a 6-1 lead by the end of the first quarter, but Tufts slowly closed the gap, tying the game at 13 with just 36 seconds left in regular time. With just over a minute left in the first overtime period, Delinsky found the net to give Hamilton the victory. In the NESCAC semifinals, the Continentals will play second seed Wesleyan in an away game. Delinsky has since been named Division III Player of the Week.

Women's lacrosse: Despite a late surge, Hamilton fell to the Colby Mules in the NESCAC quarterfinals, 13-11. With the help of five goals from Ally Franz, Colby took a 12-7 lead after three quarters. Hamilton was competitive after falling behind 5-1 and 8-3, but the early deficit was too big in the end. While Colby had beaten Hamilton 12-2 earlier in the season, this was a far more competitive game. Maddigan Leifer '26 scored four goals in the Continentals' effort to make the NESCAC semifinals.

Women's rowing: The Continentals placed third in the first and second varsity events in a three-boat race with Tufts and Williams on Apr. 27. Hamilton finished the varsity race in 7:20.78, 16 seconds behind Tufts and 27 behind Williams. In the second varsity race, Hamilton came in at 7:16.43, 15 and 16 seconds behind Williams and Tufts, respectively.

Men's rowing: On Apr. 27 Hamilton placed fourth in four-boat races in the first and second varsity eight. In the former, the Continentals came through in 6:26.39, more than 25 seconds behind the top three teams, who all finished close together. In the second eight, Hamilton finished in 6:58.94, more than 30 seconds behind third-place MIT.